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IMMORTALIZING THE SPIRIT OF THE COLONIZER

Maximiliano Lombardi
CUNY City College

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The City College of the City University of New York
New York, New York

IMMORTALIZING THE SPIRIT OF THE COLONIZER

by

Maximiliano Lombardi

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Mentor: Dr. Ramona Hernández

Second Reader: Prof. Keith Thompson

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT	ii
INTRODUCTION: PELO BUENO	1
<i>The Interrelation of Coloniality and Modernity</i>	5
METHODOLOGY	7
THE COLONIZED MIND	16
<i>Inferiorization: to Secure the Dominion of the Colonizer</i>	19
<i>De-Inferiorization. Whitening</i>	22
REPRODUCING THE UNIVERSE OF THE COLONIZER	26
<i>De-contextualization. Making the Other... Theirs</i>	31
<i>White x Non-white, for the Dominant Society, an Idealized Hybrid</i>	36
A HYBRID OF A DIFFERENT SORT	39
<i>The Fugitive</i>	43
<i>Developing a Revolutionary Consciousness. The Other meeting the Other</i>	46
CONCLUSION	53
NOTES	55
REFERENCES	63

ABSTRACT

European colonial expansion has institutionalized and simultaneously normalized, at the global level, the supremacy of a class, of an ethno-racial group, of a particular type of state organization, spirituality, an epistemology, a particular kind of institutionalization, a production of knowledge, language, pedagogy, and an economy oriented toward the accumulation of global capital. To understand these processes we cannot separate them from each other. In fact, even the word "capitalism" is misleading because it leads us to think of an economic system, when in reality it is a hegemonic system that transcends economic relations and includes race, sex, gender, spiritual, linguistic, pedagogical, epistemological relations, all articulated in a colonial of power that establishes the biological and/or cultural superiority of populations of European origin. The central feature of the modern regimes of power in all its variety, both historically and geographically, is derivative of the colonialism that started in the fifteenth century. I describe the inequalities (ethnic, racial, sexual, social, epistemic) created in the colonial system, which remained after nominal independence, as coloniality. European thought and creation, placed at the top of humanity, has been considered biologically and culturally superior. European phenotypic characteristics and cultural production has been established as the benchmark for humanity, and has thus imposed itself as the universal paradigm, with disastrous effects.

INTRODUCTION: PELO BUENO

In an interview, during New York's fashion week, a black fashion model¹ was asked, "Do you try to take care of yourself during Fashion Week?" To which she answered, "I try to take care of myself as soon as I can and especially my hair because it gets so damaged after Fashion Week! I also take Forcapil pills to make my hair stronger, which are from French pharmacies."²

Remarking that her hair "gets so damaged" caught my attention, first, knowing that, from her photos outside of modeling (candid photos); her hair is, naturally, curly, in a way that falls outside of the discernable white European features of the fashion model prototype. In my usual hyperbolic way of illustrating social phenomena, I interpreted the straightening of her hair, the process that destroys it, as a requirement she has to meet in order to enter the white world—that to remain in it, to be a part of it, to move within it, she must disfigure herself, and in her case, literally. She must be processed into her "master's" image, be clay in her "master's" hand, because only through this process of disfigurement can she enter the sought after domain of the "master."

In other words, she is allowed into white society (in this case, the fashion runway) only if she is modified to approximate whites as close as possible, in her case, at least, physically. The model's acceptance into the fashion world is as bell hooks said of her "fellow white English professors" that wanted "[...] very much to have "a" black person in "their" department as long as that person thinks and acts like them, shares their values and beliefs." This encounter "compelled" hooks "to use the term white supremacy to

identify the ideology that most determines how white people in society (irrespective of their political leanings to the right or left) perceive and relate to black people and other people of color” (hooks 1989:113).

The model has to conform and “distort” her being to either the specification of “whiteness” or to appeal to it because such a transmutation will admit her into white company, and to be admitted into the aforementioned company is to be admitted into betterment, into progress, into advancement (a big, hefty paycheck in the case of the model). “The system will give you a nice home, a front lawn, a car, a reasonable bank balance. They will say, ‘Sell your black soul’” (Rodney 1969:62). In other words, she is “rewarded for [her] assimilation” (hooks 1989:114), which is a notion that resonates the Peruvian sociologist Anibal Quijano’s assertion that domination is also a process of seduction, which I will get to later.

However, the model perceives this as perfectly rational. Note that she made it clear that the product that revives her hair is “French.” “French” is emblazoned in her imagination as the progenitor of absolute refinement and the highest social pedigree, which is why “French” is always fashionable, at least in the fashion world. Therefore, wanting to be linked to such an esteemed classification, she emphasizes to the interviewer the origins of that particular product—French—implying that, yes, she is like the French, too, in that regard. She compensates for, what Frantz Fanon defines, when he discusses the case of the mulatto, a “psychological depreciation, the feeling of debasement,” (Fanon 2008:40) by accepting the criterion of the dominant ideology (white supremacy) and adjusting her identity to it. However, by doing so, she is complicit, unbeknownst to her, “in upholding and maintaining racial hierarchies that do not involve force (i.e. slavery,

apartheid) [...]” (hooks 1989:114). Her aesthetic standards, then, are not induced from within, but are exogenous, unnatural.

Some critics use “internalized racism” to describe the phenomenon. This model, I contend, has internalized white supremacy. Her psyche is shaped by a world architected by white supremacy in which she has grown up and is educated and where she subsequently lives, moves and has her being. In other words, her fantasies are a projection of the white supremacist fantasy.

Regardless of how integrated a society may be, the sheer fact that there is a universal criterion that accepts some people readily (white), by default, while requiring others (non-white) to alter or alienate their identity to comply with it, to assimilate, in order to “advance,” is demonstrative of the unyielding continuance, and reformulation, of old power structures. In fact, as bell hooks said, “Assimilation [...] is a strategy deeply rooted in the ideology of white supremacy [...]” It urges “black people to negate blackness, to imitate racist white people so as to better absorb their values, their way of life. [...] This is especially true of social policy that has encouraged and promoted racial integration. [That] racial integration translated into assimilation ultimately serves to reinforce and maintain white supremacy” (hooks 1989:113–114).

In the case of the model, for example, it is not whites who have to adjust to her, but rather it is she who has to adjust herself to them, to whatever it is they desire of her.³ We should not readily equate entrance and acceptance into white society as progressive for the non-white subject, save for in the material sense, perhaps. If white ideals are duplicated universally, or universally observed, then integration is only corporal; it conceives little of anything new; we still move to the direction of a white “conductor,”

either externally or internally, in an ontological sense, or both.

Populations are integrated according to the white ideal through which difference is eliminated and/or suppressed. Integration, in turn, solidifies white supremacy; it accepts otherness only after it bends and shapes it to fit the white ideal, until all that is left of otherness is physical, a hollowed out shell. Only the other undergoes drastic change; it is not reciprocal. White supremacy, along with all of its harmful effects, lives on, through the other—“Power is kept pure milky white” (Rodney 1969:16).

Now, I use the case of the fashion model to illustrate a colonial discourse at play, a discourse that establishes one race and culture as superior, and denies any subject that does not carry those particular qualities. Moreover, for the colonized, to achieve a semblance of superiority, to “progress,” the colonizer must accept the colonized. Fanon defines this construction as a racist projection by the gaze of the colonizer. In order to be accepted, as close to equal as possible, the colonized must construct him/herself in the image of the colonizer, a process that, inevitably, eternalizes the “superiority” of the colonizer and the “inferiority” of the colonized.

You might be wondering, at this point, why I apply historically associated terms (colonized and colonizer) to present day social relations. To explain this I present the term coloniality; and, as its morphology implies, it has inherent links to colonialism.

Colonialism refers to the processes and apparatuses of political and military domination to ensure the exploitation of the labor and wealth of colonies for the benefit of the colonizer. Coloniality, however, is a much more complex historical phenomenon that extends into our present and refers to a pattern of power that operates through the naturalization of territorial, racial, cultural and epistemic hierarchies, enabling the

reproduction of domination. Quijano elaborated the notion of coloniality, more specifically in his notion of the coloniality of power. For now, it will suffice to say that coloniality is a pattern or a matrix of power that structures the modern world system, in which work, subjectivity, knowledge, places, human beings are ranked and ruled according to their racialization. This pattern of power not only ensures exploitation through capital by one human over others worldwide, but also subalternizes or, even worse, obliterates the knowledge, experiences and lifestyles of those who are dominated and exploited.

In analytical terms, however, we cannot confuse colonialism (a form of politico-administrative domination that corresponds a set of institutions) with coloniality (referring to a pattern of global power that is deeper and more comprehensive). Long after the process of colonization is over (which is not true, in fact, if you consider neo-colonialism⁴), coloniality remains in effect, as a scheme of thought and a frame of action that legitimizes the differences between societies, subjects and knowledge. In other words, colonialism is one of the historical experiences constitutive of coloniality. However, coloniality is not limited to colonialism but includes many other experiences and articulations that operate in our present.

The Interrelation of Coloniality and Modernity

It is necessary to clarify that: “The coloniality is not equivalent to colonialism. However, coloniality and modernity [, as we know it,] are two sides of the same coin”

(Mignolo 2000:50). That is, coloniality is inherent in modernity. In that sense, the colonizer of yore, the conquistador, the master, has never been disposed. Instead, he exists today, evermore permanently, as the edifice of our imagination and of our reference. That is to say, too, that the internalization of this power structure is historically contingent. Perhaps I am being hypercritical of the poor model, looked at her too deeply, in using her as an example. However, my intent here is to prepare a distinction between colonialism and modernity—how modernity is a by-product of Colonialism. That colonization, in the nominal sense, may be over but its effects remain. That modernity is a colonization of a different form wherein Western subjectivity and epistemology are disseminated and internalized as universal, absolute and premier. In effect, the West remains fixed in a position of superiority in the imagination of the “colonized” and the “colonizer.” These “values” perpetuate exploitation, domination, discrimination, and alienation, thus, ensuring the continuity of the capitalist system, white supremacy and Eurocentrism as the paradigm to follow. That this principle creates the identification of the oppressed with the oppressor, the exploited with the exploiter, the inferiorized with the one who inferiorizes him/her. That modernity moves inevitably in a unilateral and unidirectional way and is, thus, one of the main obstacles for developing a different vision of the world—a vision brought forth by a revolutionary subject that would transform the future.

METHODOLOGY

Unlike my previous academic work, I will not use Marx extensively as part of my analysis because a wholly Marxist analysis tends to underplay the divisions set along race and would contradict my very criticism of the European predominance of knowledge. However, before I continue, I must remark, that this is not a criticism of Karl Marx but, rather, a criticism of Marxism, itself, since, in its traditional formulation, it neglects many areas, especially within pluralistic societies. Marxism, because it is European, not only in its origins, but also in its analytical assumptions, its historical perspectives, its views, fails to confront a recurrent idea in Western civilization—racism—and, in particular, the way in which racism inevitably permeates all social structures. Race cannot be described, at least substantially, according to class or, more generally, as part of the economy. This argument, however, is not essentially anti-Marxist; it has been used for, against and within Marxism.

A classical Marxist approach to race claims that the underlying factor in capitalist societies is the opposition between the owners of capital (bourgeoisie) and non-owners (the proletariat). This division largely determines what happens at all levels of society. Racial categories are to be associated with these divisions. Therefore, if race exists, then it is because the bourgeoisie has created it to: a) better dominate a specific fraction of the workforce, which is categorized as naturally inferior or good only for manual labor; and b) to divide the workers into antagonistic racial categories in order to govern them more effectively. According to this argument, the origins of racism are in the class relations of

colonialism, and racism is an effect of class relations that has remained over time. This is a simplified version of a classic Marxist argument but it is the primary constitution of this debate.

However, I am not one that thinks class subsumes race. Marxism does not capture the power and reality of racial identifications in everyday life. It does not explain the diversity of classes within an oppressed racial category, for example the position of the black middle class who, despite having climbed the economic ladder, cannot escape the element of structural racism. Racial profiling forcefully reminds them that despite their academic achievements, degrees, publications or scholastic achievements, their racial distinctions continues to reward them with reasonable suspicion and unequal treatment.

Furthermore, the psychological adherence to the standards of European aesthetic, knowledge and history can continue on, quite well, without the buttress of an economic hierarchy. In fact, a wholly Marxist perspective is one of those Eurocentric adherences, the very thing against which I argue. There is no reason to think that a truly communist society will cease reflecting the sole conscience of a singular race. That it will overturn “the primacy of whiteness as a sign informing who they are and how they think” (hooks 1992:339). Although, it may manifest differently, racism is as compatible with Communism as it is with Capitalism. In the words of W.E.B. Du Bois, “What happens when socialists or communists are white supremacists and Eurocentrists? This is a question that Karl Marx and many of his communist comrades never considered because very frequently they suffered from white supremacism and Eurocentrism (...)” (op. cit. Rabaka 2010:61). Therefore, “There is no automatic power in socialism,” the precursor to communism, “to override and suppress race prejudice. This has been proven in America,

it was true in Germany before Hitler and the analogy of the Jews in Russia is for our case entirely false and misleading” (Ibid:60).

Therefore, class struggle, alone, will not dispel the notion of Eurocentrism as the principle of legitimacy and guarantor of superiority. What a communist society might achieve, in fact, is an equal and even acculturation of Eurocentrism and universal accessibility to European knowledge, fortifying it as the holy grail of epistemology. However, we must not reject Marxist thought, or the thought of other Western thinkers. We should include suitable ones into our repertoire, but also look beyond them if we truly want to rid ourselves of all forms of domination. In fact, occasionally, Marxian thought appears in this paper, as well as a quote, here and there, from a Western thinker; in some cases, I quote western thinkers, either to refute them, or to build upon their valid ideas.

Nevertheless, I always have a deep suspicion toward the well-intentioned gestures of solidarity and ‘benevolence’ of those who come to the defense of subaltern/oppressed groups. In her essay, “Can the Subaltern Speak,” Spivak proposes that the construction and representation of the subaltern subject can be an epistemological form of violence depending on who is doing the speaking. She focuses largely on the intellectuals who highlight oppression and present the perspective of the oppressed and the downtrodden. Therefore, her principal concern is the question of whether the subaltern can speak for him or herself, or are they condemned to be known and represented only through the voices of others.

In her characteristic frankness, Spivak gives a negative answer to her question, stating, “There is no space from where the subaltern (sexed) subject can speak” (Spivak, 2004:206). In other words, subjects that hold a position of power do not accept the

discourse of the subaltern without discursive validation. Spivak raised the question, and her response implicated that, in issues of representation, certain intellectuals, who present themselves as allies, in fact reinforce the structures of oppression and power. In making the subaltern the center of their discourse, they restrict subaltern's right to speak, to express and defend himself or herself and, thus, continue the unequal situation of the subaltern. Or, to put it more succinctly, more beautifully, I quote bell hooks, who is one of the most illuminating minds that I have discovered in my research:

No need to hear your voice when I can talk about you better than you can speak about yourself. No need to hear your voice. Only tell me about your pain. I want to know your story. And then I will tell it back to you in a new way. Tell it back to you in such a way that it has become mine, my own. Re-writing you I write myself anew. I am still author, authority. I am still colonizer the speaking subject and you are now at the center of my talk (hooks 1990:343).

It is increasingly common to find discourses that defend the subaltern at the expense of the subaltern. They speak for them, occupy their space, take charge of them, infantilize them, minoritize them. Whether they arrive as antagonistic or sympathetic, friend or foe, the privileged subject will always try to assume a paternalistic position of power. As hooks said, in regard to white feminists, "Often the white women who are busy publishing papers and books on "unlearning racism" remain patronizing and condescending when they relate to black women (...). They make us the "objects" of their privileged discourse on race. As "objects," we remain unequal, inferiors" (hooks 2000:142),

and as “objects, one's reality is defined by others, one's identity is created by others, one's history named only in ways that define one's relationship to those who are subject” (hooks op. cit. in Sefa Dei, 2005: 73).

By making the subaltern the subject of his/her discourse, the Western intellectual represents and speaks on behalf of the subaltern. This gesture stems from the historical position of the colonized, and the articulation of their voice during the era of Western imperialism. Their intervention expands the dominion of the West, as the producers of knowledge, and perpetuates the West's vision of itself as the director of humanity. The Western intellectual, in this context, repeats the historical relationship between the colonizer and the colonized. “When liberal whites fail to understand how they can and/or do embody white supremacist values and beliefs even though they may not embrace racism as prejudice or domination (especially domination that involves coercive control), they cannot recognize the ways their actions support and affirm the very structure of racist domination and oppression that they wish to see eradicated” (hooks 1989:113).

In a class on Pan-African thought, I made a rather contentious remark, but I stand by it, nevertheless; in reference to *The White Man's Burden*, I said, more or less: The only burden that a white person carries is his burden of guilt for being a burden onto others. That's it. However, if he wants to rid himself completely of that burden, then he must stop meddling in the affairs of others. Whether his intentions are friendly or not, a white person will always try to assume a position of power, either as an oppressor or a self-proclaimed savior, because his privilege and the collective psychology facilitates it. So, if we don't become our own saviors, then we'll always be at best the sheep following the shepherd.

Despite their good intentions, the Western intellectual, the ethnographer, the anthropologist, whoever that might be, would incur an ideological patronage that ends up obliterating the other, usurping her/his voice. Therefore, white supremacy and racist paternalism cannot be eradicated through the voice of the privileged; their narration of the subaltern will only reinforce it, will only maintain the structures of coloniality. It is only when the subaltern speaks, and consistently, in his or her own words, and is heard, by all, will “Eurocentrism” and white supremacy be falsified, turned to myth, and thus be displaced from its position of dominance.

For that reason, I sought the work of intellectuals who are connected, or authentic, to the people of which they speak; intellectuals that rose out of the subaltern classes. In this sense, I sought intellectuals that fit Cornell West’s theory of the Insurgent Black Intellectual, two of which I will highlight here: a) intellectuals that reconnect themselves to the communities to which they belong or to provide them with the competence of their knowledge; b) Intellectuals that merit not only in the richness of artistic and cultural achievements of their communities, but also support the community, through which their knowledge will be actuated (West 1994:84). If an intellectual seeks refuge in the periphery to mark his local identity, the periphery, in turn, finds its refuge in him, though his activeness in community work, and creating alternative routes to social inclusion. However, the Intellectual’s dialogue with the communities, alone, does not sufficiently manifest or define Cornel West's “insurgency.” Part of West’s proposal, which I consider the most relevant, is the re-articulating of the “regimes of truth.”

Defined by Michel Foucault, the concept of “regimes of truth” (Ibid:83) includes the types of discourses that a society accepts and thus exists as true, preserving the

manipulated relations of power. Although West says that Foucauldian theoretical model, as Marx's, does not speak to the uniqueness of the black intellectual predicament, Cornel West emphasizes the importance of this concept, calling black intellectuals to question the discourses of Euro-American power, which must be "demystified, deconstructed and decomposed" (Ibid:82). "The central task of postmodern black intellectuals is "stimulate, hasten and enable alternative perceptions and practices in dislodging prevailing discourses and powers" (ibid:83) instead of contributing to it. These are precisely the intellectuals I sought, which you will see in my extensive referencing of Frantz Fanon, Anibal Quijano, bell hooks, and Walter Rodney.

My mentor for this project, Dr. Ramona Hernández, brought to my attention that my work might be interpreted by some as postmodernism. However, postmodernism, as many other epistemological projects, such as Eurocentered Marxism, is trapped in the Western canon and thus reproduces the coloniality of power and knowledge. In fact, there are those who believe that "European modernity, and its postmodern interpretation, has always been and remains one long self-congratulatory and narcissistic narrative" (Rabaka 2010:4).

From 1492 until today, one of the hierarchies of the Westernized world system is the global epistemic hierarchy where knowledge produced from "the West" is considered superior to the knowledge produced from the world characterized as non-Western. Epistemological racism/sexism and Eurocentric fundamentalism caused by this global epistemic hierarchy is reproduced throughout the world through the globalization of the Westernized university. The canon of hegemonic thought and the disciplinary divisions of the Westernized university that can be found in the Westernized universities of, let's

say, Paris or New York can also be found in Algiers, Cotonou, Dakar, Buenos Aires, Calcutta, Rio de Janeiro, Bogotá, Beijing, etc. “This means, then, that almost all modern and postmodern intellectual activity, whether by whites or non-whites, unless it is critically conscious of white supremacy, adheres in one way or another to Eurocentric paradigms of intellectualism, “scholarly” research, radicalism and, even, “revolution” (Rabaka 2010:5).” Postmodernism and Eurocentered Marxism does not escape these colonial dynamics. They are both Eurocentric criticisms of Eurocentrism (although, it does not mean that Eurocentric criticism cannot challenge and dismantle Eurocentrism).

These Eurocentric conceptual frameworks would prove to be very problematic for my argument wherein I call for the de-emphasis of the very knowledge system that produces postmodernism. Furthermore, it is hard to call my work “postmodern” or even “postcolonial” for the sheer reason that I take subtle swipes at both schools of thought throughout this paper; if you are keen to it, you will see where; in fact, I already have, a few paragraphs before.

Perhaps my work, too, is Eurocentric, because, in the end, I do not abandon Marx. Frankly, I cannot, especially when I have to analyze the innermost workings of an advanced capitalism that affects populations, globally. I wonder, too, however, if I am, legitimately, the subaltern speaker. I am privileged in the sense that I speak from academe, (although it is not Ivy League (I couldn’t afford it and therefore didn’t bother applying to it), but my thinking does arise from a subaltern condition on many levels. If it did not, then this paper, as it appears, would not have materialized.

Furthermore, I am a multi-racial child, as most Latinos are, who grew up conflicted with his image, almost as Fanon described, whom I will discuss later.

Although my mother is a woman of color, I was cultivated to identify with whites, which therein required me to forsake my maternal bloodline.⁵ Adding to that, when I entered the academic space and advanced in it, the greater the danger it was to becoming utterly ripped from me.

However, right before my graduation from Hunter College, I had a moment of awakening. My best friend, Ron, asked me, “Why do you want to go to Europe so badly?” Not inclined to give hackneyed replies, I thought about it and said, “Because my education was thoroughly European and my history—an elective—an after-dinner mint.” From that moment, my eyes diverted to Latin America, both figuratively and then literally, when I went there. Ron had no idea, until later, of the profound effect that his little, straightforward question had on me. Despite some of its shortcomings (I know there are some), this paper, then, is not merely an analysis of the alienating process of the colonial experience, but a provocation to revoke its creations, too, and a call to reclaim the identities that have been denied or disfigured by it... like the fashion model’s hair.

Finally, this paper was not written for the revolutionary or the radical. My works usually never are. This was written for the unaware, the passive receivers. To them, I hold up a picture and say this is who we are, you and I (because I too do not escape from these processes). However, I want their reaction to be that of a revolutionary. I want them to disown the picture, to shatter it, even, because the image it projects is that of the master... inside. Yes, I do present a load of bad, but only to illicit the opposite—a load of good—in the reader. This is the push.

THE COLONIZED MIND

Reason, truth, and science are where the articulation of European modernity condenses; the coloniality of power is established in the domain of subjectivity, in ethnic differentiation (according to social classifications) and epistemological knowledge. The coloniality of power is, according to Anibal Quijano, the colonization of the imagination of the conquered. This means that colonization is not only domination by physical force or by physical repression; it is also the internalization or embodiment of the European imagination in the subjectivity of indigenous and black subjects. It is a power relationship based on an ethnic and epistemological superiority. That “[...] the relationship between European—also called Western—culture, and the others, continues to be one of colonial domination.” That this is a “colonization of other cultures,” which is “[...] a colonization of the imagination of the dominated; that is, it acts in the interior of that imagination, in a sense, it is a part of it” (Quijano 2007:169). The intention of colonization was not simply to subdue the “natives” militarily and destroy them by force, but to transform their soul, to Europeanize them, to make radical changes to their traditional ways of knowing the world and knowing themselves, and adopting, as if their own, the cognitive universe of the colonizer. Colonialism is, in short, a “[...] direct, political, social and cultural domination [...] established by Europeans over the conquered of all continents” (Quijano 2007:168) to make them more conducive to colonial rule.

Like Quijano, Fanon understood colonialism not only as a military and administrative apparatus that physically dominates a population and geography, but also

as a discourse that inferiorizes the colonized. This inferiority is not only a 'representation' of the dominated populations by the Europeans, but also involves undermining their systems of references, their “many ways of knowing” and their reproduction, i.e., deculturation, which is an essential mechanism to ensure domination. This ‘deculturation’ is an imposition of new ways of perceiving and existing, through which colonization becomes assimilation or, in an even more apt term, ‘alienation.’

Speaking specifically of the French colonization of Martinique, Fanon said, in his book *Black Skin, White Masks*, that colonialism instilled in “their” colonized the illusion of “assimilation”—the prospect of being able to become French citizens—which was equivalent to “whitening” or “Europeanizing” in other words, “humanized.” Far from being a purely formal matter, a few among the peoples colonized by France—politicians, intellectuals and public figures—attained the status of “evolved” or French citizen. This concept of assimilation acted as a perverse mechanism of alienation as it involved the conscious renunciation of one’s own culture, identity and history and forced the colonized to identify with the culture imposed by the colonizer.

Although Frantz Fanon's political thought reflects a form of alienation engendered by the peculiarities of the French colonial policy of assimilation (a policy that contrasts the indirect domination and racial segregation of the English colonial system), this phenomenon is not limited to the French colonies. I witness these particular manifestations of cultural and psychological alienation among other colonized people, as well. ⁶ Therefore, I am not going to argue which form of colonialism was a bit “less brutal” or a bit “less racist” because, as Fanon would say, all colonial societies are necessarily racist.

Now, it is correct to take into consideration the type of colonial policy that prevailed in specific colonies. However, there is a very deep and common root that equally affects all colonized peoples, regardless of the specific colonial policy implemented to exploit and control them. The foundation of this root is, ultimately, a nefarious mechanism of alienation. Within this mechanism of psycho-political deviation is what generates the identification of the colonized with the colonizer, of the oppressed with the oppressor, of the exploited with the exploiter, of the producer with the expropriator, and the subsequent reproduction of patterns of domination and discrimination among the assaulted as a mechanism of compensation. Fanon observes these defense mechanisms and behaviors within the social group subjugated by the colonizer:

But the men who are a prey to racism, the enslaved, exploited, weakened social group - how do they behave? What are their defense mechanisms? What attitudes do we discover here? In an initial phase, we have seen the occupying power legitimizing its domination by scientific arguments, the "inferior race," being denied on the basis of race. Because no other solution is left it, the racialized social group tries to imitate the oppressor and thereby to deracialize itself. The "inferior race" denies itself as a different race. It shares with the "superior race" the convictions, doctrines and other attitudes concerning it (Fanon, 1969:38).

This is a process of colonization that occupies the very imagination of the colonized, their subjectivity, and is what Quijano refers to as “cultural colonialism.” This “Colonialism,” as Fanon explains, “is not satisfied merely with holding a people in its

grip and emptying the native's brain of all form and content. By a kind of perverted logic, it turns to the past of the oppressed people, and distorts, disfigures, and destroys it. This work of devaluing pre-colonial history takes on a dialectical significance today" (Fanon 1963:210). Thus, cultural colonialism, as a means of social and cultural control, systematically represses the expressions, knowledge and significance of the dominated followed by the imposition of the expressions, beliefs and images of the rulers.

Inferiorization: to Secure the Dominion of the Colonizer

Those who survived genocide were sentenced to suffer the dehumanization and depersonalization of Colonialism, the most absolute form of human alienation, in Quijano's terms, cultural coloniality. If cultural coloniality (a combination of cultural repression and the colonization of the imagination) were associated with demographic extermination, then "Latin America is, without doubt, the most extreme case of cultural colonization by Europe" (Quijano 2007:170). Asia and the Middle East did not undergo such a cultural destruction but was placed in a relationship of subordination with respect to European culture in both the eyes of Europe and of Asia and the Middle East. Africa, too, did not escape the Europeanization of their cultures and societies (although, I must note that not all of Africa was conquered/colonized). "Africa and Africans suffered from the greatest crimes at the hands of Europeans through the Slave Trade and Slavery in the West Indies and the Americas" (Rodney 1969:19). However, before the arrival of Europeans, Africa was a region with advanced cultural development, but it was hidden

and destroyed, creating a legacy of involution not to be recovered and enhanced. The colonizer's mode of production, in terms of technology, was “superior” in mass production and mass destruction, and was imposed on the colonized by the sword and the cross. This imposition by the colonizer was called “civilization” while the modes of production, originating from the colonized peoples were called “barbarism.”

Since the renaming of the world according to Christian cosmology (Europe, Africa, Asia and, later, America), characterizing any non-Christian knowledge as a product of the devil, Europe, as a knowledge-generating center, built a dichotomy between civilization and barbarism by inferiorizing all other traditions (which, in the sixteenth century, were characterized as “barbaric,” converted, in the nineteenth century, to “primitive,” called “underdeveloped” in the twentieth century and, now, in the early twenty-first century, “anti-democratic”). The Eurocentric construction of all that is not within their domain (the periphery) applies to any Third World territory. In addition, any territory or persons foreign to European “civilization” become a peripheral zone considered as dependent on the center to legitimize or deny its existence. This approach, since the colonial period, has been inserted in the mentality of the European (who is considered center of civilization) and in the colonized, who, as a result, identify as peripheral/barbaric.

One of the most vicious and devastating consequences of the colonial experience is the internalization, by the dominated, of the inferiority that defines them in the dominant discourse.⁷ This inferiorization is expressed in racism. As Fanon says, “It is not possible to enslave men without logically making them inferior through and through. And racism is only the emotional, affective, sometimes intellectual, explanation of this

inferiorization” (Fanon 1969:40). Hence, racism operates as a component of colonial imposition; it “[...] is only one element of a vaster whole: that of the systematized oppression of a people” (Ibid:33).

Thus, racism is integral to the colonial experience. Through the coloniality of power, relations of exploitation, domination and conflict were “racialized”; that is, power relations are naturalized to the extent that the dominant are considered superior to the dominated. Initially, it was articulated as biological racism, or ‘vulgar racism,’ in which biological differences, between humans, designates some as superior—the colonizers—and others as inferior—colonized. Subsequently, with the changing conditions of colonial domination, racism emerged in a more elaborate form - cultural and epistemic racism.

Epistemological racism is one of the most invisible forms of racism in the modern/colonial capitalist world system. Racism at the social, political and economic level is more recognized and visible than epistemological racism. The latter, however, privileges the identity of Western whites, which is to say the thought and traditions of Western society. ⁸ This distinction displaces the biological mode of existence: “The vulgar, primitive, over-simple racism purported to find in biology—the Scriptures having proved insufficient—the material basis of the doctrine” (Fanon 1969:32). However, “This racism that aspires to be rational, individual, genotypically and phenotypically determined, becomes transformed into cultural racism” (Ibid: idem). That is, “The object of racism is no longer the individual man but a certain form of existing” (Ibid:40). Whether as vulgar or cultural racism, racism is not a phenomenon that is isolated to individuals with moral deviations, but it is constitutive of colonial social formations. For Fanon, “[...]”

racism is indeed a cultural element.” (Ibid:32).

On the side of the colonized, racism operates as a rejection of their past and as a desire to be like the colonizer. Racism is built to the point where the colonized attributes their misfortune to their racial and cultural characteristics. This perception responds to the concept of “double consciousness,” introduced at the beginning of the twentieth century by W. E. B. Du Bois, which fits into the subjective dilemma formed by colonial differences, of the subject who lives within a colonial perspective. For Du Bois, “It is a peculiar sensation, this double consciousness, this sense of always looking at oneself through the eyes of others, of measuring one’s soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity (Du Bois 2008:12).” Double consciousness is, then, a major characteristic established in the modern world's relationship with the colonial world, a relationship that brings about the practice “Racial Whitening” or the tangible effects of these power relations on the colonized.

De-Inferiorization. Whitening

Racial whitening is one's denying of their original identity (non-white) by identifying with whites, or the socially, politically, educationally and culturally hegemonic group. Therefore, in order to ascend socially in such a society, the dominated aspire to be like the dominant. Thus, ‘cultural Europeanization’ becomes a means of exercising and acquiring power. In the words of Quijano:

Then, European culture was made seductive; gave access to power. After all, beyond repression, the main instrument of all power is its seduction. Cultural Europeanization was transformed into an aspiration. It was a way of participating and later to reach the same material benefits and the same power as the Europeans... European culture became a universal cultural model. The imaginary in the non-European cultures could hardly exist today and, above all, reproduce itself outside of these relations (Quijano 2007:169).

The traits or markers identified as “positive” or “negative” are defined by European dictum. If the non-European is to advance in the European's universe, then the non-European must build her/himself according to the image or the dictates of the European. S/he must make Europe her/his ruler. In this sense, to be granted access to the colonizer's space, the colonized has to acquire the attributes—defined as positive by the colonizer—that will enable the colonized to “prove” to the colonizer that they are distinct from the rest. If the colonized does not exhibit these “positive” traits, they will be delimited to spaces of ever-persistent deprivation, discrimination and social exclusion.

However, the internalized desire to Europeanize is a desire that is painted or tinged by the white color of Western reason; a reason that is constructed on the colonial racism of the fifteenth century, that was expressed in the classification of whites, Indians, blacks, mestizos, mulattoes, is, according to Quijano, the most grave consequence of colonization. It creates a perverse effect in which the dominated, themselves, become complicit in their own domination by accepting and legitimizing the alleged superiority of the conquerors, or, as Fanon said:

I begin to suffer from not being a white man to the degree that the white man imposes discrimination on me, makes me into a colonized native, robs me of worth, all individuality, tells me I am a parasite on the world, that I must bring myself as quickly as possible into step with the white world ... Then I will try quite simply try to make myself white: that is, I will compel the white man to acknowledge that I am human (Fanon 1967:98).

The stigmatization of non-white groups leads them to recognize their identity as a negative. The internalization of an image constructed by the colonizer develops into a phenomenon of self-contempt. Who wants to identify with something that is considered inferior? Therefore, the conquered do not resist their conquerors. Instead, they aim to appeal to their conquerors, or whoever assumes the conqueror's identity, because to be approved by the conqueror, is to be recognized as him—superior.

Observing this effect, the psychoanalyst Neusa Santos Souza coined the phrase “white ego ideal” in which the subject, in Souza's case Black Brazilian, assumes an identity that is “entrenched in white emblems” that is favorable or compatible to “white hegemony.” “[...] That blacks who desire a better socioeconomic position pay the price of a more or less dramatic massacre of their identity” (Souza Op. Cit. in Nascimento 2006: 97).

The model of the ideal ego offered to the colonized is a model based on the structural rules that will form the white identity, i.e., the ego ideal of the colonized is structured on the values that will form the white ego ideal. “Through the manipulation of this media of education and communication, white people have produced black people who administer the system and perpetuate the white values – ‘white-hearted black men,’

as they are called by conscious elements” (Rodney 1969:33). This identity is not built solely based on skin color; it is not merely a corporal distinction. It corresponds to a white idealization, which is interpreted as a structure of privileges, both symbolic and material. It is an ethical, aesthetic, economic and educational ideal, a universal model of humanity, tied to the “master narrative” forged during European colonial expansion, etched deeply, through the fire, swords, and gun smoke of the past, into the consciousness of non-whites.

However, epistemic domination does not simply erase knowledge systems and the world-views of the colonized. What it does is much more perverse and effective: distort, confuse, reconfigure and expropriate. As Quijano pointed out, the coloniality of power not only represses but also produces (Quijano 1990). It does not destroy as much as it builds; this construction is more effective than simple destruction.

REPRODUCING THE UNIVERSE OF THE COLONIZER

Let us look at Racial Whitening, again. In societies that are built to guarantee the structural and symbolic privileges of whites, one must “become” white; they must amalgamate with it, dilute their racial characteristics. Whiteness has become symbol of evolution, civilization and progress. Whiteness, in this sense, is the author of progress and development in such a society. Thus, in a society such as Brazil, for example, the black subject builds her/his ego ideal within conditions geared to the formation of a white identity, that is, the ego ideal is structured on the values that would form the white ego ideal.

This idea seems to be associated with the collective dimension of what I call “love cannibal,” which presupposes “the devouring of the Other,” in which the white universe grows ever larger as more non-whites adopt white characteristics and as whites expropriate the most desirable characteristics and cultural material of non-whites. The white universe, in this sense, leaves their “encounters with the Other richer than [they were] at the onset” (hooks 2006:380). We find, then, the white universe as a region formed and transformed by a mixture of cultures and identities, the area of the arts, scientific innovation and in the acquisition of wealth. Franz Fanon stated, “Europe is literally the creation of the Third World. The wealth which smothers her is that which was stolen from the underdeveloped peoples” (Fanon 1963:102). In the same vein, Rodney stated, “White power has, therefore, used black people to make whites stronger and richer and to make blacks relatively, and sometimes absolutely, weaker and poorer” (Rodney 1969:19).

However, some say that this process creates more of a culturally hybridized society than a culturally colonized one, in that the division that lies between the colonizer and colonized is blurry and diffuse (see Bhabha 2004). That there isn't a complete oppression of the original culture of the colonized. That as much as the colonizer distorts the culture of the colonized, the colonized distorts the culture of the colonizer, and thus becomes an act of resistance.

The praying to Catholic saints by slaves, for example, was a hybridization and miscegenation that had nothing to do with mere syncretism. This hybridization was a “subversive complicity,” seeking to survive and resist colonial power relationships. Catholic saints were “transcultured.” They were subverted and redefined through a non-European cosmology wherein every saint became an African god.

However, these processes are not outdated. Here, present among us, where the coloniality of power articulates an ethno-racial hierarchy based on racist colonial ideology, are, with so much life and strength, strategies by colonial subjects, inside and outside the metropolis, especially in post-slavery societies. For example, music provides one of the most powerful metaphors for alternate strategies. The syncopated rhythm of African origin re-Africanized the structure all the musical instruments and melodies of European origin. Hip Hop music is a grand illustration of this subversion—a subversion by African rhythm of hegemonic music.

Along this line, consider the massive presence of Latinos in US territory, too, which is the result of diasporic or migratory movements and a clear example of a nation inside and outside of the conventional map. Migration occurs for many reasons, often related to natural disasters, ecological and climatic changes, wars and conquests, labor

exploitation, colonization, slavery, semi-slavery, political repression, civil war and underdevelopment. We have the presence of the Third World at the heart of the First World, disrupting the boundaries responsible for the self-definition of a univocal and homogeneous national identity. In the process, material and symbolic values, different behavior and cultural patterns and cross, cause the breakdown of “authentic” elements on both sides. It is a process of “contact zone” (Hall 1996:492), which invokes the co-presence of spatial and temporal individuals previously isolated by geographic and historical disjunctures whose trajectories now intersect. The hybrid product of this cross can be seen under the bias of a “transculturation” that (...) subordinate or marginal groups select and invent from materials transmitted to them by a dominant or metropolitan culture (Pratt op. Cit., Hernández 2005:211).

However, the fear of forgetting and the desire to fight and/or to protect the “obsolescence” of things and the disappearance of history itself cause the diasporic populations to organize themselves and seek to reactivate and/or retain their traditions of origin. In this conception, the “new society,” deterritorialized, and constantly re-signified by the power of memory, create a certain recognition of space and sense of belonging. Indeed, this does possess an element of resistance.

As it occurs in most cases of immigration, a new reality imposes new habits that are learned in different ways, according to the perspective of each group and of each person within a group. During the integration process, immigrant groups choose a location in which they wish to join. In other words, aware of his/her inferior position in the foreign society they enter, the immigrant chooses an approach that is most favorable, aiming not to be discriminated against, but rather trying to “fit.” In scientific discourse,

camouflage consists of a morphological adaptation that offers the best conditions for certain species as a defense in hostile environments. For this purpose, the subject takes the predominant color of the environment or takes a form that merges with the things around, thus manifesting a dynamic in favor of survival. Therefore, a “simulation” or “performance” takes apparent surface characteristics of the environment while preserving true characteristics under masks.

Thus, the immigrant integrates to a greater or lesser degree the dominant culture. Transculturation, then, expresses a process of transition in different stages from one culture to another. We can equate this to the genetic intercourse of individuals: the creature has something of both parents, but also different from each of the two. Adopting the values and ideals of the dominant society does not necessarily entail the complete revocation one's original cultural references. The dominant cultural environment, however, induces the negotiating of behaviors and cultural values, the revision and redefinition of values and views. If that is the case, then, what does the process of hybridization produce in the end? Which cultural components are kept? And which new ones are appropriated?

Hybridization is a two-way street; it brings transformations for both the migrant subject in relation to their daily lives, their history and their behavior, and the society that adopts it. However, there is a complicating factor in hybridization, coupled with the fact that, together with resistance to the forces of hegemony through movements of transgression, this phenomenon also generates a complicity with the power structure. Look at Hip Hop, again, for example. As bell hooks argues, Hip Hop embodies material values, sexism and misogyny, which is inherent in the cultural environment of the United

States that is characterized by hedonistic consumerism and white patriarchal supremacy (Hooks 1994).

In his book, *One-Dimensional Man*, Herbert Marcuse characterizes the “advanced industrial society” (the United States and Europe) as one that would have won the “logic of domination”—a logic involving economic exploitation and, above all, the conditioning of conscience to meet the prescribed standard of society. He named this phenomenon “repressive de-sublimation,” which means the replacement or total replacement of one's own desire for other socially imposed mandates, which is taken, without suspicion, as their own (Marcuse 1991:59). Thus, we find it is possible and real that the culture of an empire can penetrate another culture without it being realized by the recipients; they see no difference between the original aspects that belong to them, and the foreign ones that they have absorbed.

Although the dominant culture is disrupted by hybridization, the white ego ideal, instead of being completely subverted, remains functional and becomes intrinsic to the hybrid creation. In some cases, the white ego ideal is amplified, for example, in the sometimes gratuitous materialism of Hip Hop,⁹ which perpetuates an identity that valorizes the “cosmopolitan character” of “production and consumption” (Marx 2009:8). Thus, hybridization can be the acquisition or the retention of the most detrimental traits of the white ego ideal—the ethos of capitalism and the consumptive habits of the western world.¹⁰

We must consider, too, that the dominant culture is, and has always been, a hybrid creation although it tends not to give accreditation to its sources. It is constantly seeking to usurp other cultures. It is like a cannibal that, after slaying his opponent, devours him,

sometimes just the heart, to absorb his energy. A Frankenstein culture, assembled from the cannibalized parts of others, spitting out the bones of its peculiarities. It is a culture enhanced and expanded by hybrid vigor.

The dominant culture requires others cultures for sustenance, for material to build itself. Without other cultures, the dominant society produces little; it is barren, thus it craves interloping. However, through hybridization, the ideals essential to the dominant culture, if nothing else, are embedded onto the dominated, a method through which the dominant society begins the genesis of its dominance, like a seed pushed into new earth. Hybridizing with the dominant culture does not automatically defy or dismantle the nucleus of the dominant culture, but may introduce and acclimate it to new territory.

Furthermore, as long dominant society remains dominant, to put in layman's terms, the dominant society does not care if other societies reinvent the dominant culture. In fact, it might clamor for it, as white fans do for Hip Hop, and buy into the reinvention of its culture by others, to the benefit of white corporate executives. Capitalism, the progenitor of the dominant culture, is a shapeless multi-tentacled beast. Hybridization, however, does not necessarily starve this beast, although, as I will discuss later, it has the potential to.

De-contextualization. Making the Other... Theirs

Although, cultural appropriation is directly related to the highly celebrated terms of hybridization or multiculturalism, we must not accept it uncritically; the promise of

cultural integration can still house the discourse that perpetuates the privilege of dominant groups, in addition, commodify the difference. The real concern is the act of appropriation by the majority group, which does not necessarily engage in a real process of cultural exchange, but usurpation. Multiculturalism, then, happens to be the imposition of a monoculture that would eventually eliminate all otherness.

We should be careful, then, to consider acts of cultural appropriation as inherently transgressive, progressive or disinterested, and instead contextualize them and provide them with political content. Thus, when curiosity in the other makes “Otherness” an object of consumption, multiculturalism, then, continues the “long tradition of ‘celebrating’ (or rather, objectifying) difference as light but exotic entertainment for the dominant culture” (Fusco 1995:27–28). It becomes a kind of antidote to counteract the loss of vitality, spirituality and erotic pleasure in the dominant culture. This is most evident, for example, in the popularity of commercial Hip Hop, across all sectors. It highlights “[...] the power of rapacious white corporations to control and profit from stereotypes [...]” (West & Martin 2009:35).

This represents the attitude of the colonizer toward the Other, which does not simply refuse difference or denies otherness; it is simultaneously attracted to it, as well. To explain this apparent contradiction between attraction and rejection in colonial discourse, I use Bhabha’s notion of fetishism, proposing it as a theoretical model that allows one to understand and explain the stereotype.

Bhabha related the notion of fetish to the colonial stereotype, stating that the stereotype is structurally equal to the Freudian fetish, because both unite the strange and disturbing (sex or race) with the familiar and acceptable (fetish or stereotype) (Bhabha

2004:104–112). The fear is reduced when the colonizer sees the other solely as an assemblage of parts, parts that then become instruments of his pleasure. For example, when a white comedian makes fun of a black person, the comedian does not make fun of the black person's particular character, he makes fun of him for being black. It exemplifies what Rodney said, "[...] that once a person is said to be black by the white world, then that is usually the most important thing about him; fat or thin, intelligent or stupid, criminal or sportsman—these things pale in significance" (Rodney 1969:17). In that sense, the stereotype replaces the colonizer's fear of losing his racial or cultural superiority. Thus, like the fetish, the subject gives the colonial stereotype a reassuring sensation of power and control—he is rich, he is dynamic—whereas the Other is a cartoon. The Other becomes the canvas onto which the colonizer paints his fantasy—the lascivious "caliente" Latina, the black "Mandingo," the submissive east-Asian woman, etc. The dominant group indulges in the stereotype.¹¹ The stereotype is an ambivalent way to build the other, either to differentiate the other from the dominant group or to use the other to suit the pleasures of the dominant group. Moreover, sometimes, the Other plays into it. When an individual is inserted into an identity category based on allegedly fixed attributes, such as those above, to control their access to rights and privileges, the individual is closed in a frame of stereotypy—looking glass self, labeling theory—they become as described, as expected—the stereotype.

Interestingly, this situation, the attraction to the Other, has led to the metaphor of white cannibalism (which I mentioned earlier in the concept of "devouring the other"), in that it eats or consumes the other, canceling it in a manner that is analogous to cannibalistic idiopathic. Bell hooks put it very well in a timely text entitled "Eating the

Other,” which states: “Within commodity culture, ethnicity becomes spice, seasoning that can liven up the dull dish that is mainstream white culture (hooks 2006:366). [...] Currently, the commodification of difference promotes paradigms of consumption wherein whatever difference the Other inhabits is eradicated, via exchange, by a consumer cannibalism that not only displaces the Other but denies the significance of that Other’s history through a process of decontextualization” (Ibid:373).¹² In other words, a culture might become hybridized, but the capitalist identity eliminates any aspect of the traditional identity that hinders the production of goods and the perpetuation of the market. After removing it from its historical context, and defanging it of its significance, it will accept any traditional value that sanctifies or is conducive to the capitalist system and that can be fed to the white masses that clamor to adorn themselves with “exotic trinkets.”

Thus, cultural marginality is no longer a problem of invisibility, but an excess of visibility in terms of reading cultural difference as something easily commodified. But while cultural difference is more visible now than before, it poses the risk of becoming a dystopian vision, which may end up canceling the local differences, key local identities, traditional models of knowledge and the rich diversity of cultures, leading to a new cultural homogenization and, ultimately, greater control by the hegemonic structures of power.

For example, in Brazil, Samba has become a representation, a pagoda, of a mythicized national cordiality. However, such a cultural expression can become the breeder of a universal image of a society without conflict, because critical questioning is absent on the part of their representatives; they do not contribute to the awareness of individuals about their social or even racial condition, laying bare the hostility of an

unbalanced society.

Now, I neither think that representations of popular culture are destitute of critical potential nor do I think they have not yet exercised their effective role as a “counter-narrative.” However, we cannot ignore that Samba, and other non-white cultural traditions, have been included in a “culture of consensus,” an image of an integrated, and peaceful nation, which has been manipulated by politics, the media and, in some cases, tourism, in order to fill the coffers of the elite.

In order to make the ideals of the nation united, homogeneous and racially democratic, non-white representations, such as Samba, are folklorized, extracting from them their power to disseminate and circulate ideas to the convenience of white racial politics. This procedure strengthens the coordinates of racism in disguise, because it provides visibility to black and any other non-white cultures, concealing the fact that this is configured in a “segregated visibility” (Nascimento 1989:61). In the context of the United States, the massive presence of Latinos, blacks and Asians, a result of migration from the global periphery of “color” or ethnic origin, puts into question the multicultural agenda in a racist society that imagines itself as a “melting pot.” However, this metaphor, which presupposes the mixture and, consequently, homogenization, is not able to translate the complex experience of existence of these different populations within a society with a long history of racism. The demarcated limits of this visibility builds an image of a Folkloric people that, according to Abdias do Nascimento, reproduces a people who are “destitute of history, projects, problems” and have “only a profound alienation from [their] [...] identity” (Ibid:114).

We understand hybridization as the crossing of different breeds, a set of

individuals that result from a cross, or a mixture of different cultures, giving rise to a new one. However, in the case of the latter, hybridized forms of knowledge does not create the best of all worlds. We should not assume that in hybridization there is a horizontal relationship between cultures and peoples. The idea that whiteness embodies progress and otherness is an obstacle to reach it may still rest within it. Thus, the idea is hardly subversive to white supremacy. We should assume that white/non-white hybridism is a vertical relationship where whiteness still takes the dominant side. That this hybridism, in itself, does not radically change white supremacy or the subalternization of subjects and knowledge. On the contrary, it may construct a new epistemological space that incorporates and negotiates indigenous knowledge to best suit modernity rooted in white supremacist ideology.

White x Non-White, for the Dominant Society, an Idealized Hybrid

The theme of hybridization is always a rough terrain. It generates multiple readings, and most of them contradictory. For the purposes of this text, hybridization is taken as a starting point for the hegemonic notion of miscegenation. Typically, from what I gather, when we think of cultural hybridism we think of it as we do interracial love—white/non-white. Because it is not the most progressive, let alone subversive, this is the most advertised form of interracial coupling. It does not challenge white supremacy but rather re-elaborates it.

For example, I have been told or heard many times, by whites, and non-whites, as

well, that bi-racial children are “cute or “beautiful.” Of course, when they say “bi-racial” they mean white mixed with non-white, in most cases. The fashion model I spoke of in the introduction is bi-racial—a space that awards her more modeling gigs than a definitively black model. She gets more attention because she emblemizes an ideal miscegenation and is thus rewarded. A miscegenation that, instead of rejecting whiteness, openly invites it; that, instead of opposing it, works in accordance with it. Just as the colonizer “civilized” indigenous populations to facilitate the expropriation of resources and labor, hybridization has allowed whites, as the idealized group to produce an admixture with, to obtain the traits of otherness without forfeiting white supremacy. A miscegenation that is reflective of an ideal integration process—one that dilutes otherness; one that is accepting of fundamental whiteness; one that represses the “forms of knowledge production, [...] the production of meaning[s], [the] symbolic universe[s], the model[s] of expression and [...] [the] subjectivities” (Quijano 2008) that threaten white supremacy and expropriates the qualities that are most apt for the continued development of it; one that modifies Samba for tourist resorts and non-white fashion models for the catwalk. A narcissistic colonization in which the other is assimilated and reflects the image of the conqueror. Wherein, a harmonious and equal society is essentially conceived as one in which everyone is indistinguishable from whiteness. Where the white ego ideal is the common denominator.

Capitalist modernity requires the presence of whiteness as a condition of modern humanity. It has become the way that non-whites show themselves as equal to the white population—by acquiring white traits. This does not necessarily mean whiteness in racially phenotypical terms but in character. A new racism—a civilizational identity that

focuses on traits more subtle than the whiteness of skin, but an internalization of white ethos. This serves as criteria for the inclusion or exclusion of single individuals or groups into modern society. The biological traits of racial whiteness are not a sufficient expression of internalization. Blacks, Asians, Latinos etc. that demonstrate 'whiteness' get to participate in modernity. Sublimated practices arise therein, and exert an ethical and even aesthetic imposition on the rest of the population.

A HYBRID OF A DIFFERENT SORT

I have an aunt that had to put her last child up for adoption; she was and still is too poor to support any more children than she already has. Two families were interested in the child: an affluent white family from New England, and a middle-class black family from Brooklyn. I implored my aunt to give the child to the black family. That, through the black family, the child would be in close, if not direct, contact with her heritage, via historical ties that bind all those that were victims of colonization, or via the demographics of Brooklyn, itself. That with the white family, especially given that they live in an affluent town in New England, she would be considerably removed from the deep and vast richness of her complex genealogy and the turbulent history that hugs her genetics like graffiti on walls; a history she must discover if she is to become a new visionary. Nonetheless, despite my appeals, my aunt opted for the white family, a decision that saddens me to this very day as much as it angers me. That, our compulsion is, in an inculpatory fashion, to alienate ourselves, by turning our eyes toward white people for salvation. A process through which white civilization absolves itself, too, from sin by making us into the perfect image—itsself—as a humanitarian endeavor; a process that preserves their supremacy by equating their supervision and their direction as messianic and replicating their vision in others. In a kind of heroic phenomenon, the dominant culture invites the foreign identity to assume a western model and their vision of a utopian world. That even in salvation the coloniality of power is reinforced. That, without white representatives present, we are ill equipped to lift ourselves from the

stagnancy of underdevelopment that has been, without considering the historical cause, accredited to us. A process that vindicates the civilization that reduced us to barbarism. A process that voids us, without contemplation, from being resurrected as the new deliverers and authors of our own salvation—an alternate universe where the corrupted logical components originating from the European conquest of the globe would cease to be reproduced.

Metaphorically speaking, to understand that a wound cripples you, you must feel the pain that it induces. However, we address the pain, not the damaging agent. We seek remedies in immediate relief, opiates, painkillers, and equate them as curative. The opiate functions conversely, enabling the wound to persist, to fester, ignored.

The priority of some charitable deeds, like an opiate, is to distract the world from the sins of the dominant society. The white subject, in this case, projects a smiling face that gathers adoration and devotion. They want to become “a blend of the everyday and the exceptional” (Marshall 2002:232) embodying the hero who seeks happiness, and distinguishing himself from evil. To absolve themselves of any association to his/her race’s wrongdoing, the white subject may present him or herself to the subaltern as a savior-like figure. The white subject wants to look and perceive himself as a savior from the point of view of the subaltern, because that view, instead of vilifying, exalts him. When the subaltern takes the white subject for a “savior,” it creates a dependency on the white subject, by the subaltern, for salvation. However, because the dependency exists, the liberation, than, is false. Instead, it does not challenge but perpetuates the hierarchy of power. “The essence of White Power [...]” is, even in this case, still “... exercised over black peoples—whether or not they are minority or majority, whether it was a country

belonging originally to whites or to blacks. It is exercised in such a way that black people have no share in that power and are, therefore, denied any say in their own destinies” (Rodney 1969:17).

The charity, thus, never confronts the evil that creates the need for charity. It allows the system to persist, to deepen old wounds, and tear open new ones. Yes, my cousin is now off to a better life, as so many of my friends have told me, but her adoption by a white family does not confront the injurious system that forces someone like my aunt to put her child up for adoption, to seek the society that victimized her for help. Putting her child up for adoption is one of many symptoms of exploitation. The system of adoption is merely an opiate that produces an illusion of progress. What it does, instead, is reduce the third world into an orphanage that siphons babies into the metropolis; the society it has ruined is never fixed.¹³

As sugar harvested from foreign land to sweeten the tea of Western society, my cousin belongs to Paraguay no more. In this sense, Indians, blacks, mulattoes and other “castes” are left out as part of their own curative project. The solution, instead, has been to seek the executioner as the savior and adopt his ways. The psyche of the other, wanting to rise, living in an impasse, and conscious of racism, build themselves not always according to their own desires but to the desires preferred by whites.

In that sense, then, the hybridization of an identity can be more alienating than liberating. It does not always produce imaginative hybrids to be celebrated happily and merrily nor does it always reduce ethnocentrism. They can produce minefields, a constant confrontation with the hegemonic culture of Europe and the United States. They can become areas of alienation and loss, of pain and death; spaces that continuously produce

epistemological formations of violence, a gradual and unnoticed dismembering of cultural formations.

As asserted in the SNCC (Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee) paper, *The Basis of Black Power*, “Whites can only subvert our true search and struggles for self-determination, self-identification, and liberation” (SNCC). Thus, to destroy the ethos that compels us to seek the system that presents itself as a singular mode of salvation after thoroughly maiming us, physically, psychologically, spiritually, we must become our own saviors. “There must be no performances to impress whites...” (Rodney 1969:51), we must “... throw off white domination and resume the handling of [our] own destinies” (Rodney 1969:24), because real progress would be to live a world in which we don’t need the approval of or the pandering to whites in order to advance. Thus, we should not limit ourselves to a relationship between hegemonic and subaltern groups. It is not sufficient in itself to build a new social condition of knowledge or a new social order, or a decolonization of power, knowledge and being.

Considering everything I have discussed, a deviation from European ideology would be to reject the plunderer, the conquistador, the white male gaze and to accept the point of view of the dominated. A profound subversion of the dominant culture then would be not to eagerly mix with it, because that invigorates it, strengthens it, pushes it, gives it forward momentum, adapts it to change, but rather to deviate from it.

A different hybrid has to amalgamate that produces political, social and cultural strategies from subordinate positions of power, that is, invert the hierarchy of power and epistemologies, and create alternatives to Eurocentrism to resist existing power relations—an “inter-epistemology,” an alternate hybridism, between non-western

societies, subaltern peoples, which would, subsequently, “de-emphasize,” and overthrow the dominance of Western epistemology, and thereby the coloniality of power.

The Fugitive

Since being forcibly uprooted from their land, people of African decent have had to face the cultural imposition of the western white colonizer. The trauma of slavery caused an irreparable breakdown of the cultural continuity of African people. Furthermore, arbitrary racial designation did not take into account of the vast differences between African nations. Similarly, indigenous peoples, whose lands were forcibly seized by the same civilization that had enslaved Africans, were subjected to a not so dissimilar trauma, racial designation and cultural imposition. To give one an impression of how horrific this trauma was I compare it to the Holocaust, where, as Aimé Césaire said, Hitler had “...applied to Europe colonialist procedures which until then had been reserved exclusively for the Arabs of Algeria, the coolies of India, and the blacks of Africa” (Césaire 2001:36). In other words, the Holocaust was European colonialism turned into itself, done back onto Europeans.

Due to the thorough inculcation of the colonial ideology, from academic pedagogy to Christianity, all of which includes the idea of the “white person” as the savior whose direction others must follow for salvation, it is not easy for the colonized to discover the material base that disgraces him or her, historically. Because economic exploitation has been, for centuries, the essence of capital accumulation, and has been

systematically internationalized through colonization, alienation remains hidden, unperceived.

However, it can break through the cultural and racial impositions once the colonized rebels upon rediscovering and reuniting with their original culture, a culture that was once despised and rejected because of racial alienation. However, the veneration of a past cultural identity, the exaltation of his own culture and history, can take on a regressive character rather than an effective weapon against the oppressor; it is an escape into the past within a reality that remains exploitative and dehumanizing. As Fanon notes:

Discovering the futility of his alienation, his progressive deprivation, the inferiorized individual, after this phase of deculturation, of extraneousness, comes back to his original positions.... This culture, abandoned, sloughed off, rejected, despised, becomes for the inferiorized an object of passionate attachment... Because the inferiorized rediscovers a style that had once been devalorized, what he does is in fact to cultivate culture. Such a caricature of cultural existence would indicate, if it were necessary, that culture must be lived, and cannot be had piecemeal... Yet the oppressed goes into ecstasies over each rediscovery. The wonder is permanent. Having formerly emigrated from his culture, the native today explores it with ardor. It is a continual honeymoon. Formerly inferiorized, he is now in a state of grace (1969:41).

Analyzing the stages that the process of decolonization must take, Fanon points out that the original culture is an illusion in a world that has been thoroughly colonized, Europeanized, technologized and “capitalized.” A return to indigenous and native

cultures does not solve the problem of the global marketplace and its unequal exchange structures, and the distorted economies of colonized countries that serve as a mono-production and mere appendages of the metropolitan economy. Neither does a return to tradition or ancestral culture solve the problem of expropriation and economic exploitation, political domination, social discrimination and human alienation, or the capitalist mode of production that exerts an inexorable domination of what little remains of the indigenous cultures of the Third World after colonization, Christianization and commercialization since capitalist expansion in the fifteenth century. This is how native cultures, according to Fanon, have lost their authenticity, their original social function, their dynamism, and their life. As the Europeanized world developed, the original culture was set aback by colonization, and abandoned, and thus remained fixed in the past. Original traditions and customs have become anachronistic within a violently imposed system of production and destruction; re-valorization of the past becomes not a weapon, but a mere cry.

Not with impunity, however, does one undergo domination. The culture of the enslaved people is sclerosed, dying. No life, any longer, circulates in it. Or more precisely, the only existing life is dissimulated... The culture put into capsules, which has vegetated since the foreign domination, is revalorized. It is not reconceived, grasped anew, dynamized within. It is shouted (1969:42).

Although Fanon characterizes the rediscovered indigenous culture as stagnant and deprived of its former dynamism, he recognizes it as a vital function, in that its subjective

revalorization can serve as the prelude to national liberation and empowerment, or, as Walter Rodney said, "...the acquired knowledge of African history must be seen as directly relevant but secondary to the concrete tactics and strategy which are necessary for our liberation" (Rodney 1969:51). Therefore, in order to fight against all forms of exploitation and alienation of man, "intellectual alienation," to use Fanon's terminology must be confronted.

The "intellectual alienation" of the colonized, which is manifested in their identification with racial stereotypes and causes all sorts of frustrations and complexes, prevents the exploited from recognizing their economic nightmare and evaluating, in their own terms, their position as a class. As long as their consciousness remains structured by racial standards, they will remain incapable of developing a revolutionary class consciousness (op. ct. Zahar 1974:14–15).

Developing a Revolutionary Consciousness. The Other meets the Other

To make the globe viable and livable for whiteness, to maintain whiteness, forever, the west populates the globe with their ideas. In that sense, there is no difference between the liberation and oppression of subaltern groups if the white subject leads them. To the dominant group, an equal world is one in which everyone is like them, and will socialize the subaltern as such. Established at the start of the colonial era, the white ego ideal, within a modern or modernizing society has become the standard of reference. It

has configured itself as the starting point for culture, civilization, in a word, “humanity.” Now, as I have discussed though out this paper, this logic was not only accomplished through physical force but also through psychological domination by an authoritarian education of the imagination. Thus, whiteness does not remain confined to the white body, but lives on, in spirit, through the bodies of others.

We see this whiteness developed in the hierarchies generated by historical capitalism that spread out of Europe. First, an international division of labor that consists of metropolitan centers, peripheries and semi-peripheries subordinate to these centers. Second, an inter-state system compromised of political-militarist dominant and subordinate states, metropolitan and peripheral states, corresponding, in most cases, to the hierarchy of the international division of labor and mostly organized around the fiction of the nation state. Third, an ethno-racial hierarchy where groups built/identified as Westerners in terms of power, status and prestige dominate ethno-racial groups constructed and constituted as non-Western, i.e. as ‘otherness.’ Fourth, gender hierarchies where men have more power and permeate the social relations, building virile and macho patriarchal social cultural and national discourses and/or policies. Fifth, an epistemic hierarchy where European knowledge is privileged as superior to non-European knowledge through a global network of universities. A global pedagogical hierarchy where Western pedagogies are privileged as superior to non-Western. Sixth, a hierarchy that privileges Western aesthetic tastes and concepts of beauty as sublime to beauty of non-Western tastes. There are other hierarchies of the coloniality of global power that I have not mentioned here. The important thing is that these hierarchies are historically intertwined. These constitute the ideals produced by the western white world.

Therefore, the colonality of power can only collapse if the subaltern breaks from white supremacist logic by building new relationships and knowledge with other subaltern groups—an “epistemic/cultural hybridization” that reverses the positionality of power. In this sense, decolonization is not an event to remove the colonial administration and achieve independence, but as a transformative praxis focusing on the subaltern as major sources for the politics and pedagogy of liberation. We should consider the relevance and richness of new dialogues between all populations that have been historically subalternized. A renewed attention given to subaltern groups by other subaltern groups. An inter-cultural intervention and creation, that is not only political but also epistemic. An interculturality, an interracial love, oriented toward cultural and political alliance between subaltern groups; the construction of a different concept of miscegenation one that outweighs the schemes of whiteness and whitening; a mix that leans more toward the subaltern, than to the paradigm of whiteness.

For example, in South America, in some cases, when blacks escaped slavery they encountered Amerindians, wherein they found a benefit in uniting to resist the colonizer. They created a broad community-based kinship system where mutual cultural exchanges were more horizontal. This, of course, was not always true, but it did occur. While in these two dynamics, physical miscegenation was decisive, what really matters is the cultural aspects of the two different groups become the substrate for an identity that does not disappear but that is elaborated upon. This relationship unfolded in a multi-step process that moved in time; every contact between them was always different and new.

In the Caribbean, however, because Amerindians were almost completely annihilated, a different encounter occurred. There was a multiplicity of other contacts

with other colonial subordinate groups—the introduction of Asian “workers” (Indian, Chinese, etc.). In certain Caribbean nations, both African-Caribbean and Indian groups experienced the racialization of their class position. Although the heterogeneous racialized groups of people were not identical, the condensation of binary white/non-white discourse constructed an equivalent and similar experience, as they faced stigmatization, exclusion and/or discrimination in areas such as employment, education, housing, media, criminal justice system, immigration and health services. These equivalent relations have created conditions in which a new policy of solidarity has become possible.

As a result, the concept of “black” had come to incorporate South Asians in a political sense. At certain times and places, in England, for example, the meaning of blackness included people of South Asian origin. Thus, being black does not always imply an African descent. The argument clearly has some force. For example, during the Black Power movement the term “black” became reclamation of an African heritage that was denied to black Americans by racism. As a political project located in historically specific socio-political dynamics, the ideology of Black Power did not claim simply a pre-determined ancestral past. The black identity was not limited to sub-Saharan Africa or, in an even more limited sense, to dark skin. The concept of “black” emerged as a political term, a political subject entering politics of resistance against racism. The term was adopted by coalitions between African-Caribbean and South Asian organizations and activists that were influenced by the Black Power movement in the U.S. in the late 60s and 70s, which had put the concept of “black” upside down, stripping it of its pejorative connotations in racialized discourses, turning it into a confident assertion and expression

of an identity. Motivated by discrimination that affected both communities, relations of consonance were established. Individuals in these communities belong to the lower strata of society, are frequent victims of exploitation and racism and seek self-protection in each other. Avoiding the “chromaticism”—the basis of differentiation among people of color in shades of lighter or darker skin—“black” became a political color to be asserted with pride against racism.

Consider, even, the global phenomenon that is Hip Hop. Utilizing the technologies of new media and the cultural market, it establishes links for a transnational identity. In spite of its commercialization, specifically in the US, its enunciation and the ideological orientation remains firm as its fundamental core, especially when one looks at its development overseas—in Cuba, Brazil, Palestine, Senegal, etc.

It is an artistic and cultural confluence of African-Caribbean and African American expressions, which has spread to all parts of the world and taken on local overtones. In its political dimension, which involves an aesthetic dimension, as well, many of its leaders, especially rappers, use forceful poetics and acidic pronouncements that prioritize the criticism of the dominant society and culture. However, it represents one of many symbolic spaces for the politics and practices of socio-cultural transformation and self-affirmation of culture that opposes the dominant one. It exemplifies a transnational circuit of politics and culture that transcends nations and even oceans. Given the contradictions and differences that characterize subaltern groups, it, however, weaves the various stories of people into trans-networks within the colonial/modern capitalist world system.

Identities are constructed in relation to others within specific historical contexts.

Therefore, rather than to see identities as uniform and universal, there are peoples who share a common origin and a similar socio-cultural trauma, which is distinguished according to their differentiated development in history. That does not prevent social solidarity and mutual cultural recognition, but requires knowledge of the identity of each community before claiming a larger cultural whole.

By reifying the identities that resulted from colonial constructions, it fragments the configuration of alliances. The scope of “politics of identity” is limited and cannot achieve a transformation of the system and its pattern of colonial power. Since all modern identities are a construction of the coloniality of power in the modern/colonial world, its defense is not as subversive as it might seem at first sight. Identities “black” and “indigenous,” “African” or national as the “Colombian,” “Kenya” or “French” are colonial constructions. The defense of these identities might serve some progressive purposes depending on what is in play in some contexts but the politics of identity only serves the goals of one group and demand equality within the system rather than develop radical anti-capitalist struggle against the system. The system of exploitation is a crucial area of intervention that requires alliances along not only racial lines but also gender, and even class and among a variety of other oppressed groups. The new universe of meaning and imagery needs a common language despite the diversity of cultures and forms of oppression.

As Rodney said, “...the white world defines who is white and who is black. In the USA if one is white, then one is black; in Britain, if one is not white then one is coloured. Even the fact whether you are black or not is to be decided by white people—by White Power” (Rodney 1969:16). Therefore, instead of the politics of identity, we should have an

Identity of Politics, an affinity based on transnational cohesion and ideology, and a global policy of decolonization and liberation. It can be conceived as a project of decolonization and liberation embedded in cultural practices, intellectual currents, social movements and political actions by all colonized peoples and peoples of the Diaspora. It analyzes the ties that bind and the boundaries that divide the oppressed.

It is a process consisting of cultural practices, daily resistance, social struggles and political organization of the subaltern as transnational/trans-local subjects who are unified and analytically creative. It is a project of affinity and liberation based on the ideology of trans-community and the global politics of decolonization; a project of decolonization and liberation embedded in the cultural practices, the intellectual, the social movements and the political actions of subaltern subjects; a practice of liberation and construction of transnational communities based on the subaltern condition of colonized peoples and their historical agency of resistance and self-affirmation.

CONCLUSION

The subaltern embodies a privileged political position; because of their condition, liberation is to be waged by the subaltern and only by the subaltern. Only they, by their particular historical situation, acquire the necessary awareness of social structures and have the historical experience that can make liberation possible. To undertake this task, the subaltern must be made aware of their collective situation and the duality that it implies; liberation requires reflective capacity of the subaltern. They must understand the objective conditions that support their oppression.

Only through a critical analysis of reality can the subalterns liberate themselves; the reflection should lead to practice, which ultimately the objective of this paper—to bring about *a revolutionary consciousness* as said by Fanon. In that regard, it is worth noting that the revolution is eminently pedagogical, pedagogy is political. The pedagogy of liberation is the pedagogy of those who struggle for freedom, those who become aware of their reality and acquire the impetus to transform it. Pedagogical action is essential to make revolutionary subjects committed to creation and re-creation, and there the work of the educator is fundamental. Otherwise, the educational efforts only serve the interests of the oppressor. As Walter Rodney said:

[...] the intellectual, the academic, within his own discipline, has to attack those distortions, which white imperialism, white cultural imperialism have produced in all the branches of scholarship. [...] the black intellectual has to move beyond his discipline to

challenge the social myth, which exists in society as a whole. [...] the black intellectual, the black academic must attach himself to the activity of the black masses (Rodney 1969: 62–63).

NOTES

¹ To be more specific, upon further research, her background was described as Polish & Chadian.

² Read more: Anais Mali - Page 58 - the Fashion Spot
<http://forums.thefashionspot.com/f52/anais-mali-79704-58.html#ixzz1YXoIMjzu>

³ I must add, here, that this model is as thin as a rail. Skeletal is an apt description. You can literally see the outline of her femur. Eurocentric beauty.

⁴ The so-called “independence” of the peripheral countries in Latin America and, especially, in the Caribbean, from the nineteenth century until today, has been one of the myths most effective in the reproduction of “developmental” and “national sovereignty” ideologies. The problems within these regions are deemed as internal problems of the nation-state without making any connection to the exploitation and domination of the colonial/capitalist world system. Colonialism has been reduced to a legal-political control. However, colonialism is not merely a legal relationship. If we conceive of colonialism as a political, economic, spiritual, epistemological, pedagogical, and linguistic domination and a cultural/structural ethno-racial domination, then the so called independent states of Latin America, the Caribbean and Africa are still territories that need to be decolonized, which characterizes what Quijano said “independent states of colonial societies” (Quijano, 2000: 564).

First, peripheral nation-states in Latin America and the Caribbean are mostly disguised colonies, i.e. neo-colonies. The independence in the third world in the last hundred years never disrupted the global hierarchy created by 400 years of European colonization. Peripheral countries continue to be subordinated in the international division of labor and in the inter-state

system through the economic, political, military and corporate domination by metropolitan states. The illusion that each state is “sovereign” because it decides its historical destiny, free and independent from the political and economic forces of the capitalist world system, is one of the most important myths of capitalist modernity (Wallerstein 1995:93–107).

Needless to say, ‘sovereignty’ was always limited to and always operates in the most economically and militaristically powerful states in the world-system. The periphery is never sovereign from the center; they remain subject and subordinate to the metropolis by various mechanisms of colonial or neo-colonial coercion ranging from direct military invasion to commercial blockades.

The CIA led the coup of the Arbenz government in Guatemala in 1954, the invasion of Martinique by French troops in 1959, the invasion of Cuba at the Bay of Pigs in 1961, the destabilization of the government of Cheddi Jagan in Guyana in 1963, the U.S. invasion of the Dominican Republic to overthrow the constitutional government in 1965, the invasion of Curaçao by Dutch troops in 1969, the destabilization of socialist government in Jamaica in the seventies, the war against Nicaragua’s Sandinista in the eighties, the American invasion to Grenada in 1984, Panama in 1990, and Haiti in 1995 are some examples in our recent history of false sovereignty existing in neo-colonial republics (autonomous or independent). Real political independence of the peripheral is substantially weakened not only by imperialist military hegemony but also by the lack of control of capital mobility.

⁵ Tracing my maternal ancestral lineage, my mother is the descendant of those that were enslaved (African) or outright exterminated (Amerindian (Guaraní, in my mother’s case). However, I do not deny my father’s lineage, which is Argentinean, of Italian ancestry. I neither deny my mother or father’s ancestry nor accept one over the other. However, members of my mother’s side of the family tend to Europeanize their ancestral history, which always struck me as

curious.

⁶ Although Fanon, analyzes, in his book *Black Skin, White Masks*, the alienation suffered by the colonized with explicit reference to the French colonial policy of assimilation, the principle of the oppressed identifying with the oppressor also had a profound effect in the countries colonized under English rule, which was based on the political principle of “divide and rule.” In both cases, the division was solely between the colonized and the colonizer, but within the colonized, as well. Consider, for example, the South African system of racial segregation, or apartheid, in which the coloureds (people of mixed race) most closely identified with the oppressor and reproduced colonial prejudice and attitudes toward blacks, a phenomenon which is very apparent, as well, in Latin America and the Caribbean, where there is a system of colorism, a pigmentocracy. There are myriads of invented color/shade denominations people use to distance themselves from blacks and indigenous or from being black and indigenous and to identifying more with whites. Therefore, Fanon’s analysis is applicable to not only French Colonies, but is also apparent, today, and in different manifestations, among colonized peoples.

⁷ The racist theories produced by Europeans were emphatic in stating the inferiority of “race” that blacks and other non-whites were at a lower intellectual and moral stage, which prevented them from assimilating the more sophisticated structures of society. Thus, in Latin America, for instance, the process of miscegenation was promoted in the belief that it could make the descendants of Africans and Amerindians disappear, that the mixture could eliminate the inferiority of the non-white element in the course of time.

⁸ If we look at the canon of thinkers in academic disciplines, we see that it overwhelming

privileges Western thinkers and theories, especially those of European or Euro-American men (and if women are represented, let us say, in feminist studies, for example, they, too, are usually of the same background as the men). This hegemonic identity is so standardized under the discourse of “objectivity” and “neutrality” within the human sciences, that, when one thinks of identity politics, one immediately assumes and references "whites." Without the globalization of the Westernized university it would be very difficult for the world-system to reproduce its multiple hierarchies of global domination and exploitation. In this sense, the decolonization of knowledge and the university are key strategic points in the struggle for radical decolonization of the world.

⁹ In addition, it is interesting to note, in a consumer society, one may compensate for their sense of worthlessness through consumption. The more one fosters a sense of worthlessness, the greater their consumptive habits might be, this is especially telling in historically racist and classist societies.

¹⁰ For example, we presuppose that, in a consumer society, a consumer’s desire is for an object of consumption, because, in such a society, objects are the most readily accessible, if not the only, sources of happiness. Newness attributes to an object’s irresistibility. Possessing that newness brings about euphoria. However, because of the inevitable and quick expiration of the object of consumption, the euphoria, too, must be short lived. The consumer is then compelled to buy something new to regain the lost euphoria. Thus, the consumer enters an endless state of consumption, in a perpetual search of euphoria, much like a heroin addict fumbling a used syringe. Consumerism, like drug addiction, is a substitution for a real desire, because the real desire is never met. Capitalism thrives on it. The flaw is not in the object, however; the object

must be replaced, or else we would still be rubbing sticks together for fire. Denied of any other access to euphoria, the flaw, then, is the great importance we are compelled to put into objects. In such a society, the more we are deprived of happiness, the more we submit ourselves to exploitation because it promises a source of happiness, albeit short-lived and false. It is the proverbial “carrot on a string.” For the mule, the producer of its unhappiness is the deprivation that coerces it to tow a heavy load for a carrot that disappears in a few bites. Capitalism creates deprivation and exploits it. It deprives you of something you want or need thus you are compelled to work to obtain it.

Slavoj Žižek understands the object of consumption as a negative quantity. He points out, “...the object which functions as the cause of desire must be in itself a metonymy of lack” (Žižek 1997:81). In other words, the object is something one uses to suture the anxiety and fear brought about by a lack in one’s life. Despite being something tangible and material, the want of an object is due to the presence of an absence... the absence of a real want... immaterial and intangible. But, in a consumer society, all we have are little else than objects to stimulate us and satiate our desires; the mania, in this case, becomes consumption. As Dr. Gabor Maté said, in an interview with *Democracy Now*: “The normal basis for child development has always been the clan, the tribe, the community, the neighborhood, the extended family. Essentially, post-industrial capitalism has destroyed those conditions. People no longer live in the communities that are still connected to one another... [The] disconnection in society and the loss of nurturing, [is replaced] chemically” (Democracy Now 2010). However, I have added to Dr. Maté’s analysis by saying it is also replaced with consumer products. Consumer products are “sought by those who want to escape the mechanized labor process so that they can cope with it again” (Horkheimer & Adorno 2007:109).

¹¹ In her article “Eating the Other: Desire and Resistance,” bell hooks elaborates this

phenomenon much more than I can for this paper. I will use the Freudian notion of fetishism to draw a theoretical model that would understand and explain the stereotype. Freud used the term fetishism to refer to those cases in which the object of one's desire is considered 'normal' or ordinary, if such a thing makes sense. It may be, for example, a body part or an inanimate object that has no inherent sexual quality. The attraction is not to the person or thing that this object is attached to. This idea is analogous to the fetishes in which "savages" (Freud's term) worshiped as gods. The actual god does not receive the worship but rather the god's depiction does, whether or not it is correct.

A stereotype, a white person's perception of the other, not the other's actuality, is the white person's fetish. Not only are white fears projected onto the non-white, but also sexual desire. As I said to a friend, years ago, racism is not merely domination, but, there is also a sexual undercurrent to it. Think of the sexually oriented stereotypes attributed to black men or Latin women, for example. We could say, in Bhabha's words, that "By acceding to the wildest fantasies (in the popular sense) of the colonizer, the stereotyped Other reveals something of the 'fantasy' (as desire, defence) of that position of mastery" (Bhabha 2004:117).

Thus, racial difference arouses both fear and sexual desire; the two go hand in hand. The white subject fears difference, but likewise seeks it because his desire, too, is within in the difference he perceives. Or, as hooks states, "To make one's self vulnerable to the seduction of difference, to seek an encounter with the Other, does not require that one relinquish forever one's mainstream positionality. When race and ethnicity become commodified as resources for pleasure, the culture of specific groups, as well as the bodies of individuals, can be seen as constituting an alternative playground where members of dominating races, genders, sexual practices affirm their power-over in intimate relations with the Other" (hooks 2006:367).

¹² In addition, consider what has happened to the image of Muhammad Ali: Mike Marqusee

tells us in his book, *Redemption Song*, that Muhammad Ali, as a universal hero, was an invention. Ali was as vilified as Malcolm X was. More so, I daresay, because of his immense popularity, but his ubiquity made him more threatening; his status as an athlete magnetized the spotlight. Unless one was an anti-social recluse, he was inescapable.

However, there is dissonance, now, between the Ali that is remembered and the Ali that was. The Ali that is hardly able to move or speak, whose voice and charisma has been quelled by Parkinson's disease, is the Ali that is embraced and sanctified by the system.

Ali lighting the Olympic torch in Atlanta is conflictive to what he had embodied. (The Olympic committee has always been like a flea jumping from country to country, draining its host, and leaving behind pathogens in its place, where the proboscis had probed.) Almost nothing is said of the iconoclast, the Ali of yore. See, being the son of South American immigrants (my mother being among the poorest in the second poorest country in South America—Paraguay), I was given a different vision of Ali, as he meant to the rest of the world. I was an imaginative child. I pictured Ali, at one corner of the ring, prostrating, hands out, palms turned up, praying to Allah. Behind his back, loomed a monster—imperialism—waiting, with guns and missiles, loaded, drawn, targeting. When the bell sounded, Ali shot up and, when he turned around..., the monster flinched. That was the Ali I knew, a symbolic force against imperialism, vilified by the press and the mainstream, pursued by the government, despised at home, but loved in the “third world.” Now, however, he has been rendered down to an icon no more harmful to the system than Tiger Woods is.

13 Interestingly, the Paraguayan government had to declare a moratorium on adoption. Europeans were lining up for Paraguayan babies like Americans stand in line for the newest iPhone. It became perverse and damaging, a “feeding frenzy,” a phenomenon that literally drained Paraguay of its future population, like vampires on a pulsing artery. I can imagine a discussion a

European couple might have had based on a joke my cousin made: We're good people, aren't we Inga?" "Yes we are, Hans, this child's parents would have probably eaten her, plus she matches our drapes."

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